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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2017
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: FAYYAD RESPONDS TO ALLEGATIONS OF "REVOLVING DOOR"
ON "ASSASSINATION PLOT" SUSPECTS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (S) Summary. PA PM Salam Fayyad provided the Consul General (in October 19-22 calls) a detailed chronology of PA actions concerning suspects in an alleged assassination plot against Israeli PM Ehud Olmert. Fayyad confirmed that the suspects are now in PA custody. He said PA procedures on suspects detained based on Israeli requests are flawed and will be revised. End summary.

Fayyad: We Held Suspects for 2 Months
Despite No Israeli Explanation/Follow-up

12. (S) In October 19-22 conversations, PM Salam Fayyad told the Consul General that the GOI asked the PA to detain several individuals during the summer regarding a terrorist plot, but did not specify at that time that the plot was related to Israeli PM Olmert. He said the PA's Istikhbarat (Military Intelligence) detained the individuals (Muhammad Hamdan and Hamzah Brunu of the National Security Forces (NSF) and Muhammad Ghruf from the Mukhabarat) shortly after the GOI made the request. (Note: the Istikhbarat operates as an autonomous "internal affairs" security force and normally handles terror/serious criminal cases involving members of the security forces. End note). Fayyad said the PA interrogated them, and held them until September 25 when they were released. He said there had been no follow-up by the GOI about these individuals during this period and, to the best of his recollection, ISA Chief Yuval Diskin had never raised the issue with him during several meetings they held during this time.

13. (S) Fayyad said Israeli FM Tzipi Livni complained that the suspects had been released on October 19 while meeting with the Palestinian team headed by Abu Ala'a. Livni indicated that the individuals were connected to a plot against Olmert. Fayyad said he ordered security chiefs that evening to re-arrest the individuals, and all were in custody by the morning of October 20, prior to Israeli ISA Chief Yuval Diskin's October 21 statement to the GOI cabinet, which alleged the suspects had been released and did not mention that any had been rearrested.

PA Officials Dispute Israeli Version

14. (C) Palestinian press quoted Mukhabarat Chief Tawfiq al-Tirawi on October 21 as saying the "members of the cell are still in custody and are being interrogated." (Note: Ha'aretz reported October 22 that its reporters saw two of the plot suspects in detention in Jericho on October 21. According to press accounts, the third suspect was arrested previously by Israel. Endnote). PA Istikhbarat Chief Majid

al-Farraaj told the USSC on October 21 that PA interrogation of the suspects revealed that they had only talked generally about an attack on Olmert, without indications of serious planning, and said the PA released the suspects for lack of evidence after they had spent nearly three months in detention.

Fayyad Wants New Procedures

15. (S) Fayyad told the Consul General October 22 that PA procedures for release of suspects detained on Israeli request are flawed and should not have happened without checking back with the Israelis. (Note: The fact that Istikhbarat handled the detention and interrogation while Preventive Security (PSO) and the Mukhabarat are the ISA's primary counterparts may have contributed to internal confusion on the Palestinian side. End note). Fayyad said the detainees had been "lost in the shuffle,"⁸ and acknowledged gaps in the PA's system that will be remedied for future cases involving Israeli arrest requests.

WALLES